ഞെട്ടുള്ളതായി അറിയുകയാലാണ" ഞാൻ ഇതു പറയുന്നതു". ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടു ആ നികുതി പിരിക്കരുതു". മുള്ളർക്കായൽ പദ്ധതികൊണ്ടു ഭൂരിഭാഗം വരുന്ന പാവപ്പെട്ട കോൾകൃഷി ക്കാക്കു യാതൊരു പ്രയോജനവും ഇല്ല. ആ പദ്ധതി ഇന്നു, വാസ്തവത്തിൽ, ചില ആളുക ളുടെ കുത്തകയാണു". അവക്കുമാത്രമേ അതുകൊണ്ടു ഗുണമുള്ളു. ഈ പരമാർത്ഥത്തെക്കുറിച്ചു ഗ വർമ്മേണ്ടു അന്വേഷിക്കണം ഈ സ്കീംകൊണ്ടു ഉപകാരമില്ലാത്ത മറവുള്ള ആളുകൾക്കു എ ന്തെങ്കിലും പരിരക്ഷ ഗവർമ്മേണ്ടു ചെയ്യേണ്ടതാണ". അതിനായി ഈ ഉപക്ഷേപം ഞാൻ ഈ സഭയുടെ മുമ്പാകെ വെയ്ക്കുന്നു.

മിസ്റ്റർ കെ. എസ്സ്". പണിക്കർ : സർ, മുള്ളർകായൽ സ്കീം കൃഷിക്കാക്കു ഉപകാര മില്ലാത്ത ഒന്നാണെന്നു പറയാൻ ഞാൻ തയ്യാറില്ല. ഈ സ്കീമിൽ ഉൾപ്പെട്ട നിലങ്ങ ൾ ആയി പിരിക്കാം. കണ്ടശ്ശാങ്കടവിൽനിന്നു തൃശ്ശിവപേരൂക്കു പോകുന്ന റോഡിന്റെ തെ ക്കെഭാഗം എന്നും വടക്കെഭാഗം എന്നും രണ്ടായി വിഭജിക്കാം. അതിൽ ഒരു ഭാഗത്തു ന്നു ൦ ൦ ൦-ൽ ചിലപ്പോൾ ഏക്കർ ഭൂമിയും മറെറ ഭാഗത്തു ഏവു, ൦ ൦ ൦ ഏക്കർ ഭൂമിയുമു ണ്ടു", പതിനെണ്ണായിരം ഏക്കറിൽ രണ്ടായിരം ഏക്കർ ബ്രിട്ടീഷിലാണ" ബാക്കിയുള്ള ഏന്നു, ൦ ൦ ൦ ഏക്കറിൽ നു ൦ ൦ ൦ ഏക്കർ കുട്ടാടൻ കൃഷി ആയി നടക്കുന്നുണ്ടു".

Mr. President : Order, order. The time for the discussion of this demand has expired. *Demand of Rs. 38,83,504 under 30—Public Works put and carried.*

21. Public Works—(Cranganur)—Rs. 28,649

Demand of Rs. 28,649 under 21 Public Works Cranganur put and carried.

39. Miscellaneous—Rs. 24,33,341

Rao Sahib M. M. Paul *(Director of Food Supplies):* Sir, I rise to move an allotment of Rs. 24,33,341 under 39 Miscellaneous. Of this Rs. 18,41,115 under 39 (Miscellaneous) Food Supplies establishment and Rs. 24,687 under 39 (Miscellaneous) popularisation of dry grains alone directly concern the Food Supplies Department.

Mr. President : I will ask the Hon'ble Member to speak a little louder. I myself cannot hear him distinctly and am sure the Hon'ble Members on the other side of the House cannot hear him.

Rao Sahib M. M. Paul *(Director of Food Supplies):* I beg leave of the House to make a brief reference here to some of the main activities of the Food Supply Department during the current year (1120). I shall be very brief and touch only the most important matters as the time allowed to me is very limited.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri):* Sir, there is a convention in this house when a demand is moved by an Hon'ble Member from the Treasury Benches instead of making a long speech he used to reserve his comments to proper sub-heads under the various cut motions which are many number this time.

Mr. President : I am afraid that is impossible. Different sub-heads are not moved separately and therefore if an Hon'ble Member when he moves for his grant wishes to give an explanation, his only opportunity to do so is at the beginning.

Rao Sahib M. M. Paul *(Director of Food Supplies):* The food position of the State, I am glad to inform the House, has improved considerably during the year. Our present stock of rice is about 34,500 tons while our stock of rice during this time last year was only about 7,100 tons. Our only source for the supply of rice are imports from outside and local purchases. We have secured large supplies from both these sources in the current year. Under the last Khariff plan (1943 November to 44 November) our rice quotas amounted to about 54,000 tons of which 24,055 tons could not be moved during that year itself. This was allowed to be carried over to the current year and as a result we have during the current Khariff plan (1944 November to 1945 November) a total allotment of about 76,000 tons of rice. With the improvement in the rice position it was decided not to import certain other food grains such as Bajra, Jowar, Maize, etc., which were used to be supplied to us to meet our rice deficit. This enabled us to utilise all the wagon and steamer facilities to import large quantities of rice. From the beginning of the year to 15th Karkadagam 1120 (16th August 1944 to 31st July 1945) about 54,546·4 tons of rice were imported to the State from outside towards our quotas. We also secured, in addition, from outside about 20,200 tons of rice out of the Travancore share with the kind consent of that Government. Thus we have in all imported about 74,750 tons of rice during the first 11½

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

months of the current Malayalam year. This is considerably in excess of imports made during the year 1119 which come to 33,288 tons only. As regards local purchases the figures for the first elevan and a half months are about 54,71,950 paras of paddy or 27,360 tons in terms of rice as against 51,35,177 paras of paddy or 25,675 tons in terms of rice in the previous year. This was in spite of the fact that all the crops in the year, *viz.*, Virippu (September) Mundakan (January) and Kole (April) sustained damage to an extent varying from about 30 to 40 per cent. When considering the damage caused the local purchases must be deemed to be very satisfactory. With a view to secure the entire surplus of paddy available from cultivators certain amendments had to be made in the Paddy Acquisition Order 1119, to obtain additional information about the crops ripe for harvest and ensure greater control over the movement of paddy within the State. I may assure the House that these amendments were found to be absolutely necessary for the purpose above mentioned and that special care is being taken to see that the various rules in force in regard to the procurement scheme are worked in a liberal spirit and without causing any unnecessary hardship or inconvenience to honest cultivators.

Wheat.—Wheat is one of the important food grains on which we were depending to make up our rice deficit. We were supplied with large stocks of wheat for this purpose by the Central Government and we made full use of it. With the improvement in the rice position the importance of wheat has diminished and we require only a smaller quantity now about 1,300 tons, in the shape of wheat and wheat products in addition to stocks in hand.

Rationing.—At the beginning of the year the scale of ration was 12 ozs. of cereals per adult per day consisting partly of rice and the rest mostly wheat and to a small extent some other food grains as jower, ragi, etc., according to availability of stock. It was raised from 1st Kumbham 1120 (12th February 1945) to 16 ozs. of food grains per adult per day consisting of 12 ozs. of rice and the balance in wheat. This two articles constituted the main items of our food ration during the year. On a few days in the month some dry grains also have been issued. With the improvement in the rice position the rice ration was steadily increased during the year. We were able to give only a rice ration of 8 ozs. per adult per day for about 15 days in a month at the beginning of the year. Due to the successive increase in the rice ration it was possible to give rice on all days from 1st Dhanu 1120 (15th December 1944) the amount of ration being 8 ozs. of rice per adult per day. It was raised to 10 ozs. of rice from 1st Makaram 1120 (14th Januray 1945) and to the present scale of 12 ozs. of rice from 1st Kumbham 1120 (12th February 1945). For the purpose of rationing the age of a child had been fixed below 13. From 1st Kumbham 1120 (12th February 1945) all persons aged 8 and above were considered as adults. A second census of our ration population was taken last Makaram (June 1945) according to which there are about 15, 46,200 persons (11, 26, 00) adults and (41,98,00) children entitled to get rice ration. By the above census there was a reduction of 26489 units of ration per day. We have now to provide for a total quantity of over a lakh of tons rice per year for purposes of rationing according to the scale of ration now in force. During the first nine months of the year we had insisted that a person who buys rice should purchase 1/4 portion of it in wheat also. This rule is no longer in force.

One important matter connected with the distribution of rice is the price at which it is sold to the people. The Government are fully alive to the need of supplying this staple article of food to the people at the cheapest possible rate. The bulk of our quotas are from Northern India, viz., Sind, Baluchistan and Kazhmir where the price of rice is high. This year some quotas have been sanctioned from C. P., Eastern States, Orissa and Bengal. The quotas from Orissa and Eastern states are arranged to be supplied via Madras. But we are not benefitted by the low price of rice prevailing in Madras due to the fact that we have to pay replacement cost which means the price prevailing is Eastern States, Orissa, etc., and their transport charges from these areas to the suppling areas in the Madras Presidency. The price of rice in Bengal and Eastern States is also comparatively high. Hence we are forced to keep a high level of price. But as a result of the protest made from deficit areas in this behalf some of the supplying areas have reduced their selling price. Still the average cost of the total rice procured from out side and inside the State comes to a high figure making it impossible to reduce the selling price of rice without incurring loss. To help the people to purchase the entire quantity or rice ration now made available to them, the Government also decided to subsidise the sale of rice to some extent. Thus with effect from 17th Mithunam 1120 the selling price of rice has been reduced from Rs. 0—6—4 to Rs. 0—5—8 per Edangali. The purchase price of paddy of Rs. 1—6—0 per para has not been altered. It is difficult now to assess correctly the loss of the Government are sustaining on this account but it is anticipated, on a rough estimate that it will come to about a lakh of rupees a month.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

I may in this connection inform the House that want of transport facilities which is one of our main difficulties in importing food stuffs from outside still continues in spite of the improvement in the war situation and the cesation of hostilities in Europe. It is only recently a quota about two thousand tons of rice due to us from a distant province had to be cancelled merely because shipping space was not available though stock was ready for despatch. Again our quota of rice from Bezwada is delayed due to inadequate supply of wagons for transport. Similar difficulty has been experienced in the case of sugar and jaggery also. Another matter that I would refer to in this connection is the quality of rice distributed about which complaints have been received. I have already explained to the House on previous occasions that the quality of rice we get from some regions outside the State is not satisfactory and that strong representations had been made in proper quarters to set matters right. As a result of the efforts made by the State in this direction there has been considerable improvement in the quality of rice we are able to distribute to the public. A large portion of our foreign quota comes from Sind and some variety of rice supplied from this region is not liked by the people here. Every possible step is being taken to get rice of a better quality. One special difficulty in this connection is that the rice obtained from North India mostly consists of raw rice. A large majority of our people are not accustomed to raw rice. No efforts are spared to secure as much quantity of our rice quota as boiled rice. We are experiencing difficulty for purchase of boiled rice even from the Madras region. Our imports from this region had to be held up for some time because of our insistence on this variety of rice. But Madras had been kind enough to arrange to supply the bulk of our quota from that Province in the shape of boiled rice. As the raw rice has a tendency to deteriorate early and in view of the large stocks of raw rice we had, there was necessity, of late, to issue a larger proportion of raw rice in the sales from our ration shops. From the beginning of this month we have reduced the proportion of raw rice, the present scale being half and half and even this is confined to the deficit areas. It is hoped that it will be posssible to reduce the proportion of raw rice still further.

Sugar and Jaggery are some of the other essential articles for which we had acute scarcity.

Sugar.—As regards sugar the position was very precarious during some months of the year The quota of sugar allotted to the State is only 3,900 tons for the quota year (1944 December to 1945 December) while for our normal requirements we require over three times the quantity at least. Moreover, the arrivals during November, December and January from Mills, were very little so that there was an acute sugar situation here. Loans, were therefore, taken from Madras and Mysore (400 tons in each case) and it was possible to avert a crisis with the help they so generously and kindly extended to us. I may state here that the All India sugar position this year is reported to be not satisfactory, the total production being less by about 2½ lakhs tons than that of the previous year.

Jaggery.—We are getting jaggery from Madras to supplement local production. The quotas allotted from Madras is 5,000 tons. During the beginning of the year there was great scarcity for this article and the price shot up. The private merchants found it difficu't to purchase and import the quotas in time. Again stocks began to go underground after it reached the State to be hoarded by some merchants with a view to profiteer by creating artificial scarcity or illicitly sending it to places outside the State when better price prevailed there. Government, therefore, took direct control of its import and distribution. The price of jaggery has also been reduced to 2 as. 9 ps. per pound. The stock position of the article is now fairly satisfactory.

Milk.—There is acute scarcity of milk in the State. It has not been possible to arrange for an adequate supply of milk for which we depend to a great extent on outside supply. Under the free milk distribution scheme undertaken by this department we have so far distributed about 67 tons of milk among expectant and nursing mothers infants and malnurished children from centres varying from 100 to 300 according to seasons of the year. The distribution is conducted by Honorary workers. It is hoped that it will be possible to continue the distribution next year also.

To check the hoarding of and prevent profiteering in some of the articles of very common need other than foodgrains is another item of work undertaken by this Department. It was found necessary for the purpose to bring in a statutory measure comprehensive enough to regulate and control the price of such essential articles. Accordingly the Hoarding and Prevent Profiteering Proclamation 8 of 1119 was promulgated on 15th January 1944 (2nd Makaram 1119). It was

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

subsequently amended by Proclamation XXII of 1119 and XVII of 1120 issued in July 1944 and June 1945 respectively. All articles except food grains come under the ambit of the above proclamation unless specifically exempted by the Government. Various articles have been exempted accordingly from the provisions of this Proclamation.

The strict enforcement of the provisions of the Hoarding and Prevent Profiteering Proclamation and the various notifications thereunder has made it possible to restore confidence in the minds of the public by dispelling the scare that was noticeable before, due to the scarcity felt for articles that had to be imported from foreign countries. The Hoarding and Prevent Profiteering staff in this department detected 116 cases under the Proclamation. The police detected four cases and two cases were detected in persuance of information furnished by British Authorities and of this 122 cases, 50 cases have been disposed of. The accused in 11 cases have been convicted and in one discharged. In 7 other cases the offenders were warned and let off and in 31 cases action was dropped or prosecution withdrawn or case referred by police. 72 are now pending disposal.

In order to effect strict control over the distribution of consumer goods among the numerous dealers of the state, and the subsequent sale of these articles to the consumers, "The Consumer Goods (Control of Distribution) Order 1120 was issued in the State on 30th March 1945. 3 cases have been detected for violation of the provisions of this order and all of them are pending. With a view to ensure a judicious and equitable distribution among genuine consumers only arrangements have been made in respect of articles which are most scarce due to short supply to effect retail sales only on the strength of specific orders from the authorities concerned. Such a procedure, though it may cause some inconvenience to the general public, has been found to be highly necessary to facilitate a rationed distribution among the really necessitous people and to wipe out completely the possibility for black-marketting in these articles, the supply of which is not steady and sufficient enough to meet the demands in full. As and when conditions improve, it is assured, such restrictions would be relaxed.

I now come to Finance. Government commitments on account of this Department are very heavy, the total expenditure estimated for next year in connection with the Food Supply schemes being Rs. 20,80,848. It also includes a provision for a sum of Rs. 7,00,000 provided under subsidy for the sale of rice. In the revised budget for the current year a sum of Rs. 6,09,000 will be found provided under loss on working of the Food Supplies Department. This amount represents the net loss on the total transactions of the Department till the end of 1119.

The Diwan President has, in his opening speech, briefly indicated how this loss has been brought about. I shall only add a few words in further elucidation of one important item covered by it namely loss on account of stocks lost in transit and due to deterioration, tillage, etc., which amounts to Rs. 3 lakhs. Third takes in loss sustained on account of short deliveries in cargo despatched in country crafts and also consignments sent by rail which we received only partially due to no fault of ours and for which we could not get any compensation. The cargo in two country crafts were wholly lost. The amount under this head comes to about Rs. 32,500. Again, towards the end of 1118 large quantities of tapioca was purchased by the Government in view of the then acute food situation. This did not find a ready sale and a portion of it got deteriorated mainly on account of the heavy untimely rain. The value of stock written off on this account amounts to about Rs. 67,000. The balance represents loss due to spillage, deterioration etc. I beg to assure the House that this deterioration is not due to any want of proper care on the part of the Government or its officers in the methods adopted for purchases and storage of food grains. We are purchasing the articles through persons who are experienced in the line. In view of our acute scarcity for our staple food, rice and also the difficulties of securing adequate shipping and wagon facilities, Government thought that as many additional foodstuffs as possible should be stocked at any cost whenever they could be secured in order to supplement the meagre rice ration we could give. Some times, even at the time of purchase, some of the food grains we could get were already subject to seevil attacks. We accepted them for want of anything better. In view of the anxiety of the Government to supply non-rice food grains to make up our huge deficit in the rice supply, Government purchased them. Subsequently the consumption did not come up to expectations. One reason for this is that we were able to secure large quantities of other better food materials which was not anticipated in the beginning.

Disinclination of the people to take to new kind of food stuffs is another reason. Again some of the food grains that were purchased in good condition could not be imported in time but had to be stored near the place of purchase for want of transport facilities. We also imported

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

some commodities because we found from the market conditions that stocks had run low and the prices had gone up. It happened that as soon as we imported those articles, the hidden stocks of the merchants came out and the prices went down, with the result that our sales were less than what was anticipated. This, however, had the beneficial result in lowering their prices for the consumer.

I may also be permitted on this occasion to explain the main items of increase in the estimated expenditure from Rs. 6,84,494 in budget estimate for 1120 to Rs. 16,68,222 in the revised estimate for the same year. Six lakhs out of the ten comes under the loss in the working of the department, the details of which have been already furnished to the House. Another important item of loss is the amount of Rs. 1 lakh spent for the purchase of milk. 3/5 of the amount will be recouped from the Medical Department. The balance has been spent to distribute milk freely among poor, malnourished children and expectant mothers in the State. Another important item is Rs. 68 thousand which has been incurred for additional godown space, Rs. 28 thousand for construction of some permanent sheds and Rs. 60 thousand for rent of godowns. Additional space became necessary both due to large stocks and to the new way of stocking which requires comparatively larger godown space. Rs. 41 thousand spent under establishment is another item of expenditure. This was caused by the appointment of 3 State Rice Officers in foreign places outside the state and the strengthening of the staff, especially account section, in the Head Office and the subordinate offices.

Item 1.—Expenditure was incurred on the advise from the Government of India experts. We got quotas from places where there had been no State Rice Officers before and hence the officers referred to in item 2 had to be appointed. The expenditure under item 3, was absolutely necessary in view of the increased work in the respective offices. Another important item of increase is under allowance (Rs. 47,400). This was partly due to the revision of the rates of various allowance and also due to the increase in the establishment.

I would not take the valuable time of the House any more, as I shall have occasion to refer to the other important matters in the course of the discussion on the various cut-motions.

I request the House be pleased to sanction the entire allotment of Rs. 24,33,341.

CUT MOTION No. 26

Inspection of Rice Mills

*Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri):* Mr. President, I move that the allotment of Rs. 4,06,893 for Food Supplies Establishment including the pay of the Inspector of Rice Mills be reduced by Re. 1. Before doing so, may I get one information from the Hon'ble Member for Food Supplies. On page 163, an Inspector of Rice Mills on a pay of Rs. 80—100 is shown and lower down 86 watchmen on Rs. 15. Are these watchmen intended for watching the Rice Mills?

Rao Sahib M. M. Paul *(Director of Food Supplies):* Yes.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri):* Much obliged for the information.

Sir, the object of the cut as stated here is to point out to the Government the shabby inspection conducted by the officer as also these watchmen, resulting in the poor quality of the rice given out by the Mills. I was very carefully listening to the elaborate, elucidating speech of the Hon'ble Member for Food Supplies and when he came to the quality of rice I was surprised to find that he had no word to say about the home-made rice. He was intent upon the imported rice and the inevitability of the quality being poor and therefore such quality of rice going to the consumer. He was significantly silent, Sir, about the quality of home-produced rice which come out of the Mills. After the paddy that is taken from the agriculturists is unnecessarily removed in these days of difficulties for transport to the mills to be milled and sent back again in these days of difficulties of transport, to the areas where it is to be given, in these mills, which I do not hesitate to assert in this House are mostly favourites of the Department concerned, persons are appointed, Sir, to watch the process of milling and whether a deterioration takes place to the detriment of the public. There is an Inspector on Rs. 80—100 to do the whole work in the whole of Cochin. There are 86 watchmen on the "big" pay of Rs. 15 to do the work at the Mills. We can understand, Sir, what sort of watching is done by the watchmen who are the men on the spot as distinct from the Inspector who has to roam about the whole State. Questions have been put during the Legislative Session with regard to the work of the watchmen, what

*Speech not corrected by the Hon'ble Member.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly